

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 01112 130048Z

51

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9787

INFO INS WASHDC

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

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INS WASHDC PASS INS MIAMI

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SREF, HA, US

SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF ILLEGAL HAITIAN ALIENS IN MIAMI

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. THE DAILY LE MATIN RAN AS ITS LEAD STORY MAY 9 AN ACCOUNT OF THE ARREST MAY 7 IN MIAMI OF 22 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM NASSAU ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE US ABOARD THE 37-FOOT YACHT "TOPOGRAPHIC OCEAN" OWNED BY BAXTER FREEMAN ANFD LAURENCE GRAHAM. THE 22 INCLUDED FIVE HAITIAN MALES AND SIX FEMALES, FOUR JAMAICAN ADULTS AND SEVEN JAMAICAN CHILDREN AGING BETWEEN FIVE MONTHS AND FIVE YEARS. EACH ALIEN HAD PAID FREEMAN AND GRAHAM \$350 FOR THE "MIDNIGHT FERRY" TRIP BETWEEN NASSAU AND MIAMI. THE ARTICLE ADDED THAT THE BAHAMIAN GOVERNMENT HAD CANCELLED THE RESIDENCE PERMITS FOR MANY HAITIANS AND JAMAICANS IN THE BAHAMAS, CAUSING SOME OF THEM TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT IN FLORIDA.

2. NO ASYLUM - THE ACCOUNT STATED THAT EACH PERSON ABOARD THE YACHT IF CONVICTED FACED A POSSIBLE FINE OF \$1 THOUSAND AND A PRISON SENTENCE OF FIVE YEARS. IN ADDITION THE YACHT'S OWNERS WILL BE FINED \$2 THOUSAND FOR EACH ILLEGAL ALIEN. IT QUOTED
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PAGE 02 PORT A 01112 130048Z

CHESTER WOISH, INS DIRECTOR IN MIAMI, AS SAYING THAT THE HAITIANS

WOULD NOT BE TREATED AS REFUGEES BUT AS PERSONS SEARCHING FOR WORK ILLEGALLY, AND THAT "WE HAVE ENOUGH UNEMPLOYED HERE". IT SAID THE FIVE HAITIAN MEN WOULD BE DETAINED AT IMMOKALEE, COLLIER CO., AND THAT THE SIX HAITIAN WOMEN WOULD BE RELEASED "UNDER OBSERVATION", UNTIL THE LEGAL PROCESSING IS COMPLETED TO PERMIT THEIR RETURN TO THE BAHAMAS. HOWEVER, IT ALSO QUOTED INS OFFICER J.K. BRESLIN JR. AS STATING THAT "IF THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO ASYLUM, THEIR CLAIMS WILL BE EXAMINED IN GOOD AND DUE FORM". IT SAID THE INS ADVISED THAT MOST REFUGEES SEEKING ASYLUM CLAIM THAT THEY WOULD BE KILLED IF THEY WERE TO BE RETURNED TO HAITI, BUT IN FACT THAT MOST HAITIAN REFUGEES ARE ATTRACTED TO THE US BY "EMPLOYMENT AND AMERICAN DOLLARS".

3. THE ARTICLE SAID THAT THE ELEVEN ARRESTS BROUGHT THE NUMBER OF HAITIANS DETAINED FOR ILLEGAL ENTRY TO 1,530, OF WHICH ONLY A HANDFUL HAVE BEEN DEPORTED. THE PREVIOUS HAITIAN CASES ARE BEING CONSIDERED BY THE US COURTS. IT SAID THAT LAST OCTOBER THE FIFTH COURT OF APPEALS REJECTED THE ASYLUM APPEALS OF 209 HAITIANS, UPHOLDING THE FINDINGS OF DISTRICT COURT JUDGE WILLIAM MEHRTENS, WHO FOUND NO PROOF OF PERSECUTION. IT ALSO SAID THAT FIVE MONTHS AGO A LEGAL ACTION WAS INSTITUTED ON BEHALF OF 400 HAITIANS SEEKING AUTHORIZATION TO WORK, WHICH JUDGE MEHRTENS HAD REFUSED ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE WERE ALREADY TOO MANY MILLIONS OF AMERICANS UNEMPLOYED. END UNCLASSIFIED, BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

4. COMMENT - THIS IS THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE RECENTLY OF THE HAITIAN ILLEGAL ALIEN PROBLEM IN FLORIDA. IT SHOULD HAVE A CONSTRUCTIVE IMPACT IN TERMS OF OUTLINING PUBLICLY THE BASIC FACTS OF THE MIAMI SITUATION AND THE ATTITUDES OF THE INS AND US COURTS. IN SO DOING, IT HIGHLIGHTS THE LEGAL AND ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FACING WOULD-BE ILLEGAL ALIENS. LAST NOV. 21 LE MATIN, IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED A "LETTER FROM NASSAU", REPORTED ON THE LEGAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING HAITIANS IN THE BAHAMAS (SEE FBIS, LATIN AMERICA, 11/22/74 - VOL. VI, NO. 227 - ANNEX NO. 79). WE BELIEVE THAT ARTICLE ALSO HAD A SOBERING IMPACT LOCALLY, AS DID THE JAN. 9 AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE STORY ON DEPORTATIONS OF HAITIANS ILLEGALLY IN CANADA AND LE MATIN'S JAN. 10 WARNING THAT THE USG MIGHT SOON BEGIN DEPORTATIONS OF HAITIANS ILLEGALLY IN FLORIDA (PAUP A-24 OF 2/14/75).

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PAGE 03 PORT A 01112 130048Z

5. FOR THIS POST'S SUGGESTIONS REGARDING ANY LARGE SCALE DEPORTATIONS OF HAITIANS FROM THE US, SEE P. 7 OF PAUP A-127 DATED 8/27/74.
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THOMSON

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